



NATIONAL WEATHER
SERVICE -
SEATTLE/TACOMA

SKYWARN® Spotter News

www.weather.gov/seattle

FALL 2016

The Fall Storm Season is Here

October has arrived. The days are shorter, nights are longer, leaves are turning color, and the fall storm season is upon us.

October marks the start of our wind storm season and runs through early March. Our flood season usually begins in November and continues through February. Mid-November is when our lowland snow season can begin and extends into early March. And we have had a taste of all of these events in recent years.

What is the outlook for this winter? Last winter's warm El Niño, one of the three warmest since 1950, dissipated by late spring. Earlier this summer, the trend was for La Niña this winter. But during the latter part of the summer, the cooling trend in the eastern Pacific tropical waters leveled off.

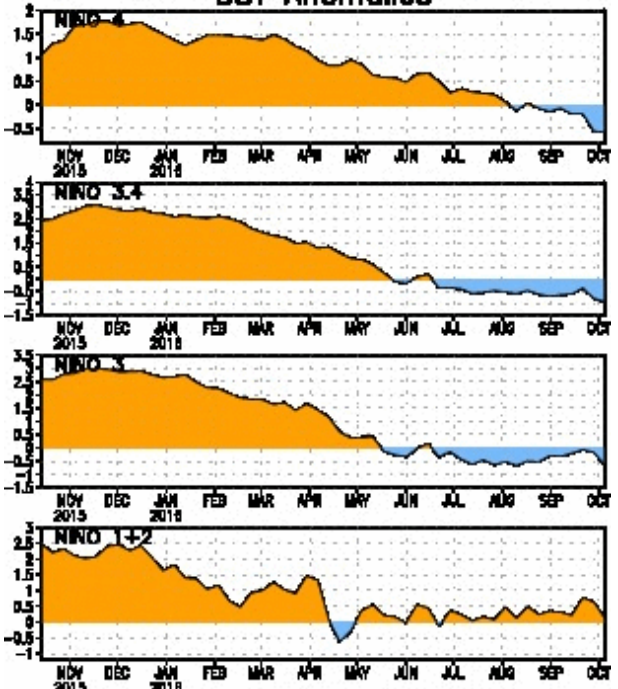
At this writing, it is anticipated that we will have "neutral" or perhaps weak La Niña conditions for this winter season, meaning those equatorial waters west of Peru will likely have near or just below average sea surface temperatures.

Neutral winters really offer no significant trend regarding temperatures or precipitation. What they do offer is a variety of hazardous weather events. When compared to El Niño and La Niña, neutral winters are number in the frequency of significant flooding events, a close second to La Niña for wind storms, and ranks number two behind La Niña for lowland snow events.

In the last 20 years, two significant neutral leaning toward weak La Niña winters provided some memorable hazardous weather. Remember Snowmageddon December 2008 followed by heavy rain, flooding and landslides in the first half of January 2009?

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SST Anomalies



Sea surface temperature anomalies from the Climate Prediction Center.

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**Spotter
Training
coming to
Skagit, King,
Pierce, Lewis,
Grays Har-
bor, Clallam
and Jefferson
counties**

Spotter Training Update and On-line Courses

Spotter training sessions are planned this fall in Skagit, King, and Pierce counties with more on tap for Lewis, Grays Harbor, Clallam and Jefferson counties. The current training announcements are available now on our web site headline at www.weather.gov/seattle. The remaining announcements will be posted as soon as arrangements are completed. Also watch your mailbox for training announcements near you. Training helps new and veteran spotters, including interested citizens, amateur radio, law enforcement and fire personnel, parks and public works, transit and many others. If you want to attend one of these sessions, please RSVP via the contact information on the training announcement. If you wish to arrange spotter training near you, contact your local emergency management agency. We look forward to seeing you at a training session near you!

Some National spotter training is now available on-line via NOAA's Comet MetEd web site. Here is the link: https://www.meted.ucar.edu/training_course.php?id=23. The two courses available now are The Role of the Skywarn Spotter and Skywarn Spotter Convective Basics. You can take these Simply register at the MetEd web site and take the courses at your leisure. They are a good supplement to the courses on-line at no cost. spotter training held locally, yet do not replace local training. Enjoy!

SPOTTER REPORTS WANTED

Many spotters feel their reports may not be important or needed. Oh, contraire!! If you are experiencing strong winds, accumulating snow, or any other spotter report criteria, contact us! These event-driven reports help support warning messages in effect, help emergency management officials better determine where to deploy their limited resources, are reported by the media, encourage people to take action to stay out of harm's way thanks to your 'ground truth', and verify our warnings. So, don't be shy to contact us when significant weather visits you at home or on the road!! A reminder – if you move or change your address, or have an updated phone number or email address, please let us know so we can keep your information current. Contact Jay Neher with your updated information at jay.neher@noaa.gov.

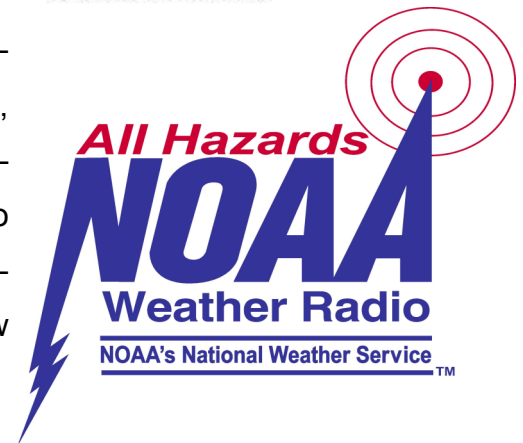
October is Weather Radio Awareness Month in Washington

Governor Jay Inslee has proclaimed October as Weather Radio Awareness Month as well as All-Hazards Preparedness Month in Washington. The campaign goal is to have weather radios become as common as smoke detectors in homes and businesses.

Direct from the National Weather Service, NOAA Weather Radio helps protect lives and property via its warning alarm feature, and site specific and event select capabilities. However, many people are not aware of this cost effective life-saving service or use it. Winter is just around the corner. A weather radio is an important preparedness tool in your home and car preparedness kits before the wind blows, the rivers rise or the snow flies!

Weather Radio is your personal all-hazards warning system and serves as Washington's "all-hazards" warning system, including tsunamis, volcanoes and hazardous releases. For more information and retailer discounts, visit the Washington State Emergency Management campaign host web site at www.emd.wa.gov.

As a part of the Weather Radio Month campaign, NWS forecast offices across the state will be activating the Emergency Alert System (EAS) for the Required Monthly Test (RMT) on October 20th at close to 1020 AM to initiate the statewide 'drop, cover and hold' earthquake drill and for the outer coast, the annual tsunami warning communications test as well. Your weather radio should activate for this drill and broadcasters will carry the test on air, all part of the west coast Great Shakeout. To register for the Great Shakeout, visit <http://shakeout.org/washington/> and join the fun! Hundreds of thousands of others do!



**ENSO
Neutral or
weak La
Niña
conditions
are forecast
this winter**

Fall cont...

...from page 1.

Or how about the heavy snow that fell just after Christmas in 1996 followed heavy rain, clogged roadway drains with nowhere for the melting snow to go, wet heavy snow laden roofs collapsing, river and urban flooding and over 1000 landslides in western Washington? Those were some memorable recent neutral winters!

The best chance for significant wind storms and heavy rain/flood/landslide events is this fall. Odds are greater for lowland snow over the past two El Niño winters with the best chance occurring from about the holidays through January. The mountain snowpack may get off to a slow start but finish near or perhaps a bit above average by the first of April next year.

As a weather spotter, now is the time to prepare your home and business, and brush up on your fall and winter weather reporting criteria. Place your reporting criteria near your phone or on your refrigerator, and put your spotter number on it. Perhaps put a copy in your car too! Ensure your rain gauge is clean, free of obstructions like trees and structures, and ready to go. In addition, have your snow boards and marking flags ready to be placed near your rain gauge in case snow is in the forecast. Is your anemometer in good operating order? If you do not have an anemometer, have your Beaufort scale handy. Once done, you'll be ready to report any heavy rainfall amounts, strong winds and snow amounts. In addition, fall is our secondary maximum for thunderstorms during the year.

While you are preparing, do you have your minimum three-day preparedness kit for each person ready in case you need to evacuate for a flood event, or the power goes out for an extended period of time? In the wake of more major disasters around the U.S. and the world this year, having a mobile preparedness kit is essential for each family member and business employee, and you may need those supplies for far more than just three days as demonstrated by recent major hurricanes. For complete information about preparedness kits and what to have in them, refer to www.takewinterbystorm.org, www.redcross.org or www.ready.gov, or pick up a preparedness kit brochure at your local Red Cross chapter or emergency management office.

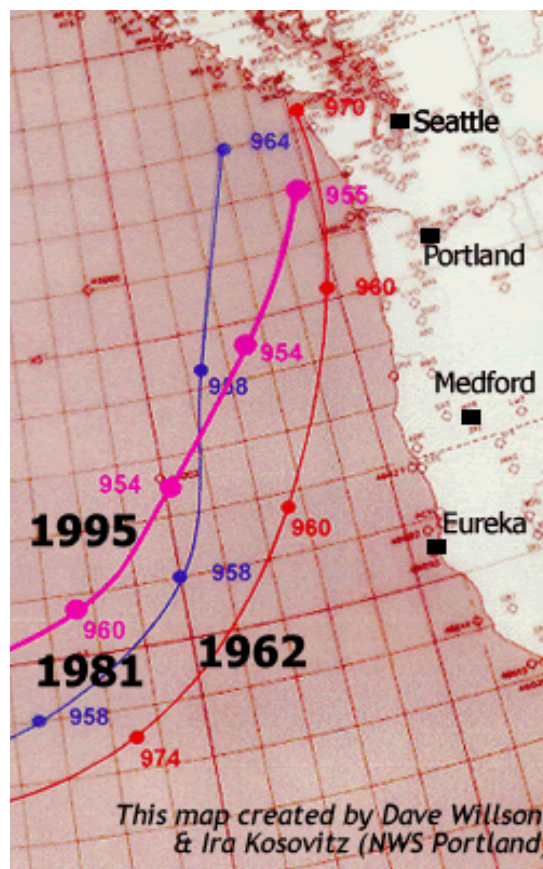
The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center's seasonal weather outlooks are updated on the third Thursday of each month. You can find these outlooks as a headline on our NWS Seattle web site at www.weather.gov/seattle/ Stay tuned to the weather this fall and winter. Be weather aware and weather prepared. Have a safe fall and winter, and we look forward to your weather spotter reports this season!

Columbus Day Storm Trivia

Match the strongest reported wind gusts with the western Washington location from the 1962 Columbus Day Storm, 54 years ago and still reigning as the strongest non-tropical wind storm to hit the lower 48 in American history. The answers will appear elsewhere in Skywarn Spotter News.

Peak Wind Gust Reported

Renton	80
Toledo	100
Whidbey Island Naval Air Station	89
West Point in Seattle	88
Tacoma	83
Bellingham	80
Paine Field in Everett	113
Naselle Ridge near Ilwaco	150



Comparison of storm tracks: NWS Portland

Take Winter By Storm Campaign

Are YOU Ready For Winter? That is the opening quote on the Take Winter By Storm campaign web site at <http://takewinterbystorm.org/> The campaign web site offers emergency preparedness checklists for your home, vehicle, pets, and more, emergency contact cards, videos to help raise your readiness, and more.

You can register to obtain important updates and discounts on emergency supplies. The web site information helps you create and maintain preparedness kits, an emergency plan for you and your family, and how to practice your plan to enhance your readiness for whatever weather comes our way. Visit <http://takewinterbystorm.org/> to learn more and help you get ready for winter.



This year's Skywarn Recognition Day is slated for December 3rd - mark your calendar! www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/hamradio/



Is Your Rain Gauge Clean?

Each rain droplet from this past rainy season has a microscopic dust or dirt nucleus. After a period of time, the microscopic nuclei collection looks like a bathtub ring near the bottom of the gauge. It only takes a few minutes to clean the gauge and helps produce more accurate precipitation measurements.

Pour some bleach and hot water into the gauge or measuring tube. Allow it to sit for a while, then rinse it with hot water. That's all there is to it! If the sediment and green "stuff" persists, it may take a few more rounds of soaking and cleaning.

Another cleaning alternative is to use denture cleaning tablets and warm water. Soak for a few hours, rinse out, and it will look practically brand new and ready for this winter!



CoCoRaHS Update

October 1st marked the start of the water year as well as our wet season across Western Washington. We've already had a wet start to the season so far! Each year CoCoRaHS headquarters tabulates water-year statistics for every single CoCoRaHS rain gauge. Click here to access them: www.cocorahs.org/WaterYearSummary/.

This includes some precipitation accumulation graphs and comparisons to average – really good climatological information. So here is the plan, and we could use your help: To assure the best possible statistics, please go back and review your data entries for the past year and make sure you didn't accidentally forget to enter or mis-enter any of your daily reports. This is also a great opportunity to fill in any missing zeros.



Please check out www.cocorahs.org for more information about the CoCoRaHS program. There's no limit to the number of observers so join today!

National Weather Service Seattle

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www.weather.gov/seattle



Climate Newsletter

The Office of the Washington State Climatologist produces a monthly weather summary that is available online or by email. Check out the summer review. To view OWSC's latest newsletter please visit:

www.climate.washington.edu/newsletter

Feedback!

Your feedback is wanted! Please let us know ...

What would you like to see in future Skywarn newsletters?
Additional spotter training?
CoCoRaHS training?

Comments or questions?

Contact jeff.michalski@noaa.gov

Trivia Question Answers

Peak Wind Gust Reported (MPH)

Toledo 89

Tacoma 88

Renton 100

West Point in Seattle 83

Paine Field in Everett 80

Whidbey Is. Naval 80

Bellingham 113

Naselle Ridge 150

So, how did you do?